



1965-2025

Preparing for a Site Visit

Jacob R. Werner, VMD

Director--USA

Celebrating sixty years!



adaidac
INTERNATIONAL

Outline

AAALAC Overview

Value of AAALAC Accreditation

Accreditation Process



Because we care

Consideration. Communication. Compassion.

Thank you for all you do every day to create a "Culture of Care"—an environment that supports animal and human well-being in science.

Participation in AAALAC International accreditation champions a Culture of Care—it encourages programs to continuously improve and evolve, fostering excellence in animal welfare and research. Learn more at aaalac.org

1965-2025

60

Assessment. Accreditation. Education.



Mission:

- AAALAC International improves the welfare of animals in science and education through the accreditation of organizations meeting high standards of humane and responsible animal care and use

Vision

- A world where excellence in animal welfare and science converge.



The Accreditation Program

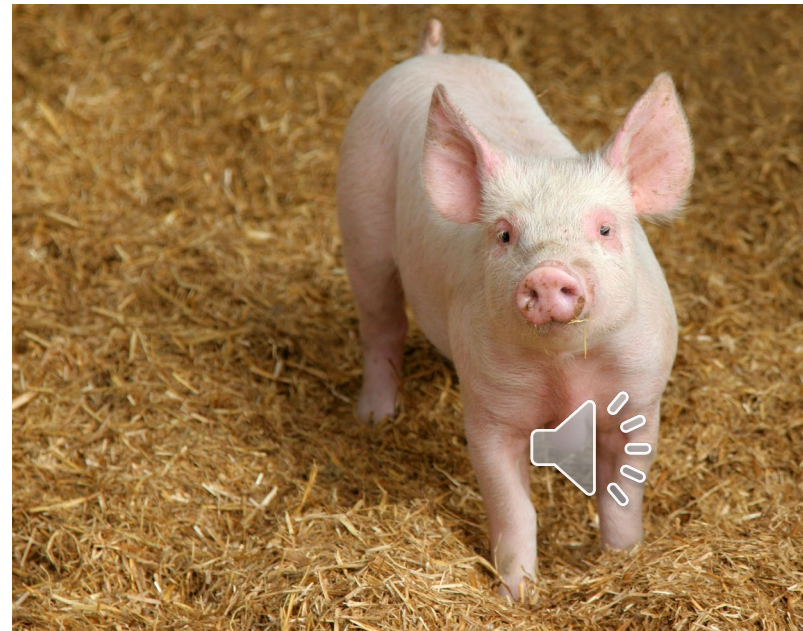
- ✓ completely confidential
- ✓ performance-based
- ✓ a peer-review process



Who does AAALAC Accredited?

Programs using any animal
species in science and
education

Includes traditional
laboratory animals,
farm animals, wildlife,
and aquatic animals



Value of Accreditation

“Attainment of accreditation demonstrates that an institution's animal care and use program maintains a standard of excellence beyond the minimums required by law.

Accreditation also demonstrates an institution's accountability and its efforts to promote sound ethical practices.”



Accreditation Demonstrates...

Commitment to animal care and welfare

Quality

Scientific validity

Accountability



Key Program Components

Administration

Occupational
Health and
Safety

Veterinary Care

IACUC/Oversight
Body

Physical
Plant/HVAC

Animal
Environments



Role of the IACUC/OB in the Accreditation Process

Composition/Participation

Program Oversight

Policies and Procedures

Program Review/Inspections

Protocol Review



Occupational Health and Safety Program

MUST be part of an overall animal care and use program

Participation of all at-risk employees

- PPE risk assessment and training

Extent and level of participation

- Risk assessment performed
 - Job related risks
 - Personal health risks



Program Components

Workplace Risk/ Safety Assessment

- ✓ Allergies, Autoclaves, Biohazards, Bites/ Scratches, Cage washers, Chemicals, Radiation, Waste anesthetic gases, Zoonoses

Personnel Risk Assessment

- ✓ *Identifying at-risk personnel (job risks)*
- ✓ Initial (Pre-placement)
- ✓ Periodic

Personnel Protection – Hierarchy

- ✓ Engineering safeguards; Procedures/Policies/SOPs; PPE

Medical Services

- ✓ Illness, Accident response & treatment, Immunization/ preventive medicine, OH professional

Training – Must be ongoing



Occupational Health and Safety Program

Documented declinations of participation

Hazard Identification performed routinely

Waste anesthetic gas exposure

Allergy awareness and mitigation

Zoonoses awareness and prevention

Animal Environments

Social housing and environmental enrichment for all species

Sanitation effectiveness monitoring

Clean and uncluttered

Condition of caging

Adequate cage sizes

Exemptions documented and approved by IACUC/OB



Animal Environments

SOPs in place
and followed

Sanitation
schedules

Breeding colony
management

Checklists
completed and
current



Veterinary Care Program

Access to all animals

Effective method for identifying, treating, and following up on ill animals

- Documentation of Tx and resolution

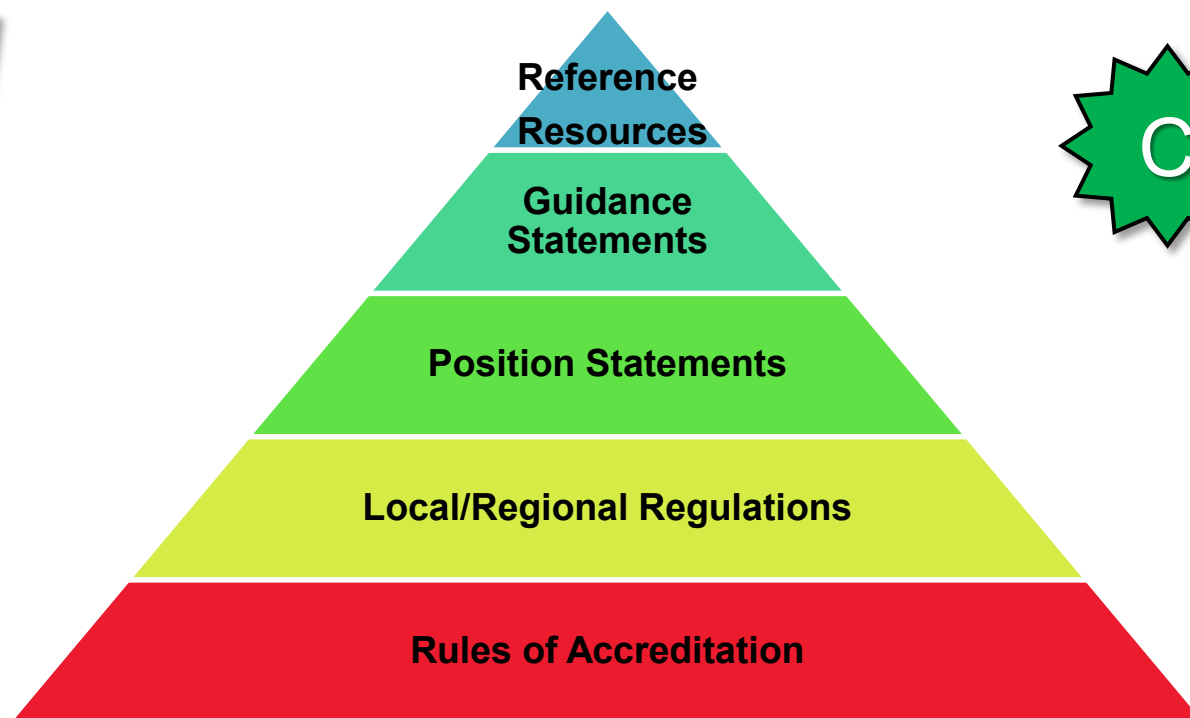
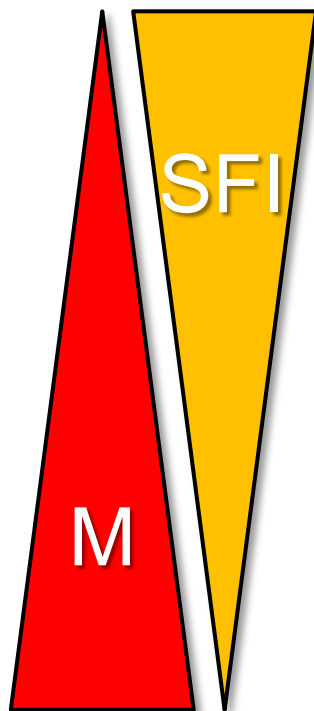
Part-time veterinarian visits documented

Frequency of rounds sufficient for facility

Anesthesia/analgesia: current, documented

Aseptic technique





AAALAC's Standards



Position and Guidance Statements

Position Statements

Supplemental requirements and recommendations on selected topics

Clarify AAALAC expectations and support consistent interpretation

Used in accreditation to inform findings and, in some cases, commendations

Primary Purpose / Typical Outcome: Promote consistent application of expectations; may contribute to Mandatory Findings or recognition of exemplary practices

Guidance Statements

Clarification where questions commonly arise

Clarify expectations when standards are not explicit

Used in accreditation to inform findings and more commonly support Suggestions for Improvement

Primary Purpose / Typical Outcome: Provide direction and clarification; typically support program enhancement and continuous improvement

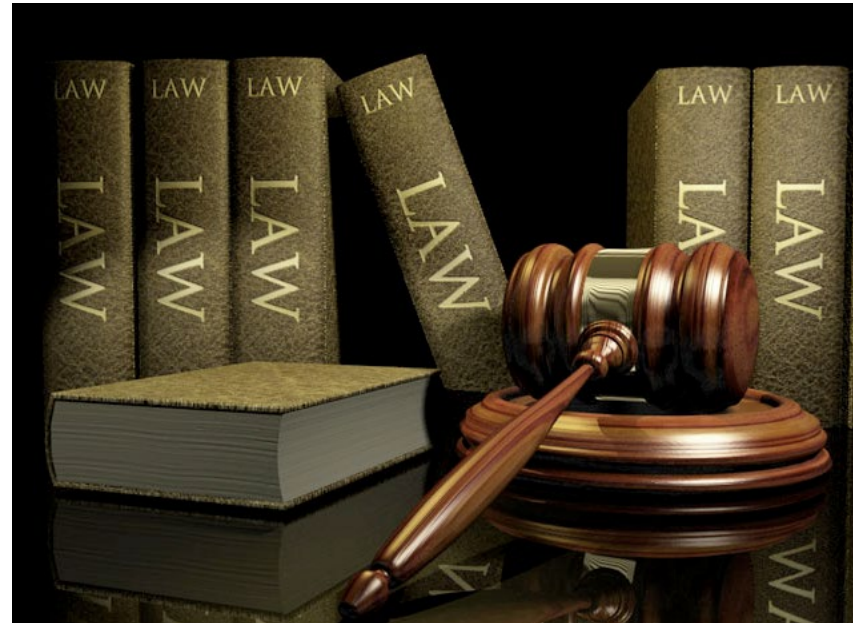


How to Determine Which Standards to Follow



Engineering Standards

- Defined, objective, measurable
- Often included in legislation as requirements
- Example: minimum cage dimensions; environmental conditions, composition IACUC/OB...



What Are Performance-Based Standards?

- ❖ Define outcomes, not rigid methods
- ❖ Focus on achieving thriving animals and strong programs
- ❖ Allows institutional flexibility



AAALAC - Acronyms

PD	Program Description
PSVC	Post Site Visit Communication
COA	Council on Accreditation
SV	Site Visit
M	Mandatory Finding
SFI	Suggestion for Improvement



Accreditation Process



Self Evaluation

Development of Program
Description



Site Visit

Peer Review Assessment

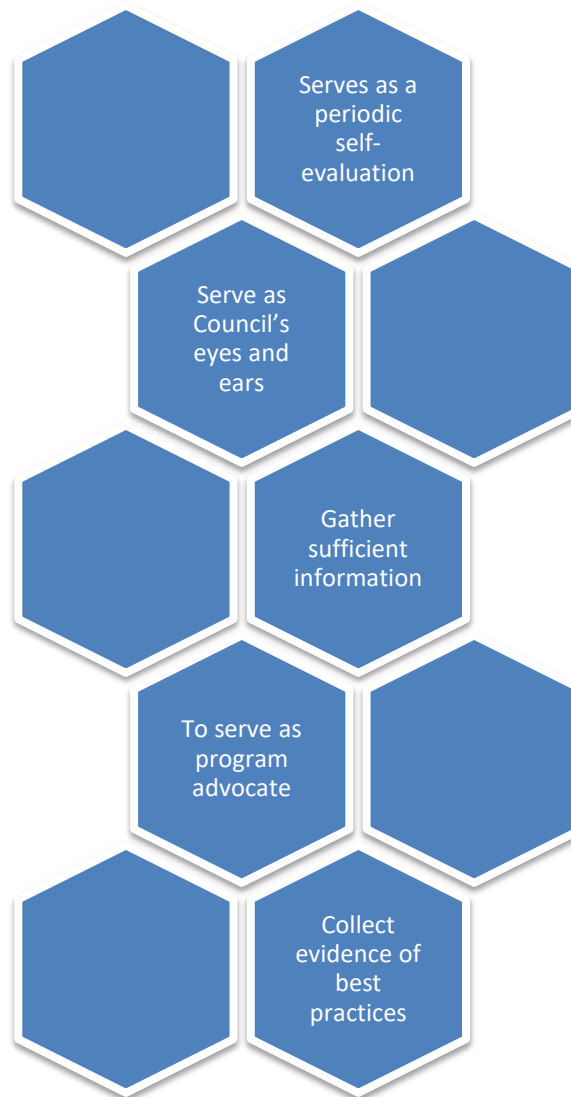


Council Deliberations

Council Determines
Accreditation Status



Purpose of the Site Visit



Before the Site Visit



Council member is assigned



Date is set with the institution



Co-Visitors are selected

Shared information is confidential



Site Visit Process

Entrance Briefing

Program Review

Facility Walk-through

IACUC/OB Meeting

Document Review

Executive Session

Exit Briefing



Entrance Briefing

Introductions

Explain the accreditation process

Review the proposed daily activities

Explain possible final outcomes

Offer Exit Briefing at conclusion

Program Review



Review/clarify aspects of program using the Program Description



Site visitors may request additional supporting information



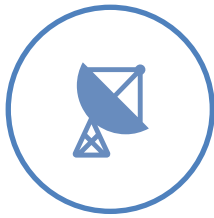
Facility Walk-through



Health of animals



Research staff
engagement



Sanitation/Repair of
facilities/satellites



Emergency Contacts
& veterinary support



Collaborations



Laboratory visits



Meeting with the IACUC/OB

Describe accreditation process

Speak with lay representatives

Discuss any issues or difficult protocols

Assess IACUC/OB training and
continuing education opportunities



Document Review

Disaster Plan

Adverse Event Reporting Plan

Training Records

Regulatory Agency Inspection Reports

Assurances

IACUC/OB meeting minutes/ semiannual
reports

Selected Animal Use Protocols

Selected Standing Operating Procedures
(SOPs)



Executive Session

Prepare

- Time to prepare for Exit Briefing

Discuss

- Discuss issues and prepare notes

Commendations

- Program Commendations

Recommendations

- Program Recommendations to convey to the Council on Accreditation for deliberation



Exit Briefing

Conducted by Council member

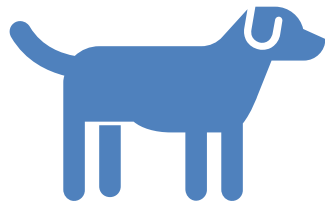
Summary of program strengths

Review Commendations and

Recommendations in the form of Mandatory findings and SFI.

Independent opinions of site visitors. Final decision from COA

Commendations



Recognize and highlight exceptional areas of an institution's commitment to animal care and welfare.



Commendations provide feedback to an institution by recognizing and highlighting areas of excellence.



Types of Site Visit Findings

Mandatory findings are deficiencies that ***must*** be corrected for Full Accreditation to be awarded or continued.

Must indicates actions that are imperative for humane animal care and use.

Suggestion for Improvement (SFI) encourage consideration of an upgrade or enhancement to an already acceptable or even commendable program.

Should indicates a strong recommendation.



Exit Briefing

Opportunity to respond

PSVC within 14 days

Exit Briefing is provided
verbally, not written



Exit Briefing – Potential Outcomes

New Applicant Institutions

***Award Full Accreditation**

***Award Conditional Accreditation**

Correction within ... month
(at the discretion of Council)

Provisional Status

Mandatory Item(s) - Correction within 24
months
(at the discretion of Council)

Withhold Accreditation

Accredited Institutions - Revisit

***Continued Full Accreditation**

***Conditional Accreditation**

Correction within ... month
(at the discretion of Council)

***Probationary Accreditation**

(Mandatory Item(s) - Correction within 12
months)

Revoke Accreditation

*green color indicates that the unit is accredited



After the Site Visit

PSVC from program

COA drafts site visit report prepared

Report reviewed by designated Council Members

Council deliberations/ three times per year

Notification of accreditation status



Preparing the Physical Plant

Maintenance: repair, clean and sanitizable

MUST have HVAC performance data, current within 12 months of site visit

Temperature and humidity monitored

Contingency plans for power loss

Cage wash safety!



Preparing the Staff

Staff should be 'familiar' with the accreditation process,

Be aware of daily operations

Site visitors may ask staff questions:

- Regarding activity and engagement
- Access to training and continuing education opportunities
- To assess the program's culture of care



Preparing for a Site Visit

- Do
 - Maintain program in “AAALAC-ready” state
 - Self-identify and resolve deficiencies
 - Keep administration involved and educated
 - Make sure practices match the Program Description
- Don't
 - Practice “management by AAALAC”



The site visit should be a positive experience and an opportunity to demonstrate that you are remaining diligent, staying current with regulatory requirements and ever evolving industry standards, while maintaining a high level of excellence.



1965-2025

60



High Standards of Humane and Responsible Animal Care

For more
information...

AAALAC International

5205 Chairman's Ct., Suite 300

Frederick, MD 21703

Email: accredit@aaalac.org

www.aaalac.org



A world where excellence in
animal welfare and science
converge.





1965–2025

Thank you!

aaalac.org | accredit@aaalac.org

